

Introduction

RESPONDING TO NEW CHALLENGES

The decade of the 1980s was a period of change for the management of Washington's forests. As a result, the 1990s have ushered in an era of new expectations for state forest land. In this era, Washington citizens have a broader vision of forestry, where trees are not seen in isolation from other natural resources. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources, having shaped and encouraged the changes of recent years, is prepared to respond to this new vision.

The Forest Resource Plan reaffirms the department's commitment to act as a prudent land manager. The department will continue to generate income from state forest land to support schools and other beneficiaries. The policies of the plan also require the department to analyze and, if necessary, modify the impact of its activities on watersheds, wildlife habitat, special ecological features, wetlands and other natural resources. The plan focuses the department's attention on these resources so that it can make better decisions that accommodate the public's need for school revenue, wood, healthy forests, and environmental benefits.

VISION FOR STATE FOREST LAND

The department has a clear purpose in caring for state forest land based on stewardship, innovation, commitment and competence. Department employees manage state forest lands and resources in an exemplary manner. Forest land planning is based on early collaboration with land users, neighbors, governments, tribes and the public, with mutual recognition of obligations and responsibilities. When necessary, the trust beneficiaries are compensated for a variety of uses by public and private sources. The department aggressively markets timber and a wide array of nontimber products. The department uses the most appropriate tools and technology. The department recognizes that assets owned by the trusts include the entire ecosystem and manages each site with the entire ecosystem in mind. The requirements for the management of timber and nontimber resources are integrated in landscape planning. Finally, the department recognizes the value of its employees, promotes creative thinking at all levels and accepts risk as an element of decisions.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Forest Resource Plan was developed and written by the Department of Natural Resources to guide it in managing 2.1 million acres of state forest land in the next ten years (1992-2002).

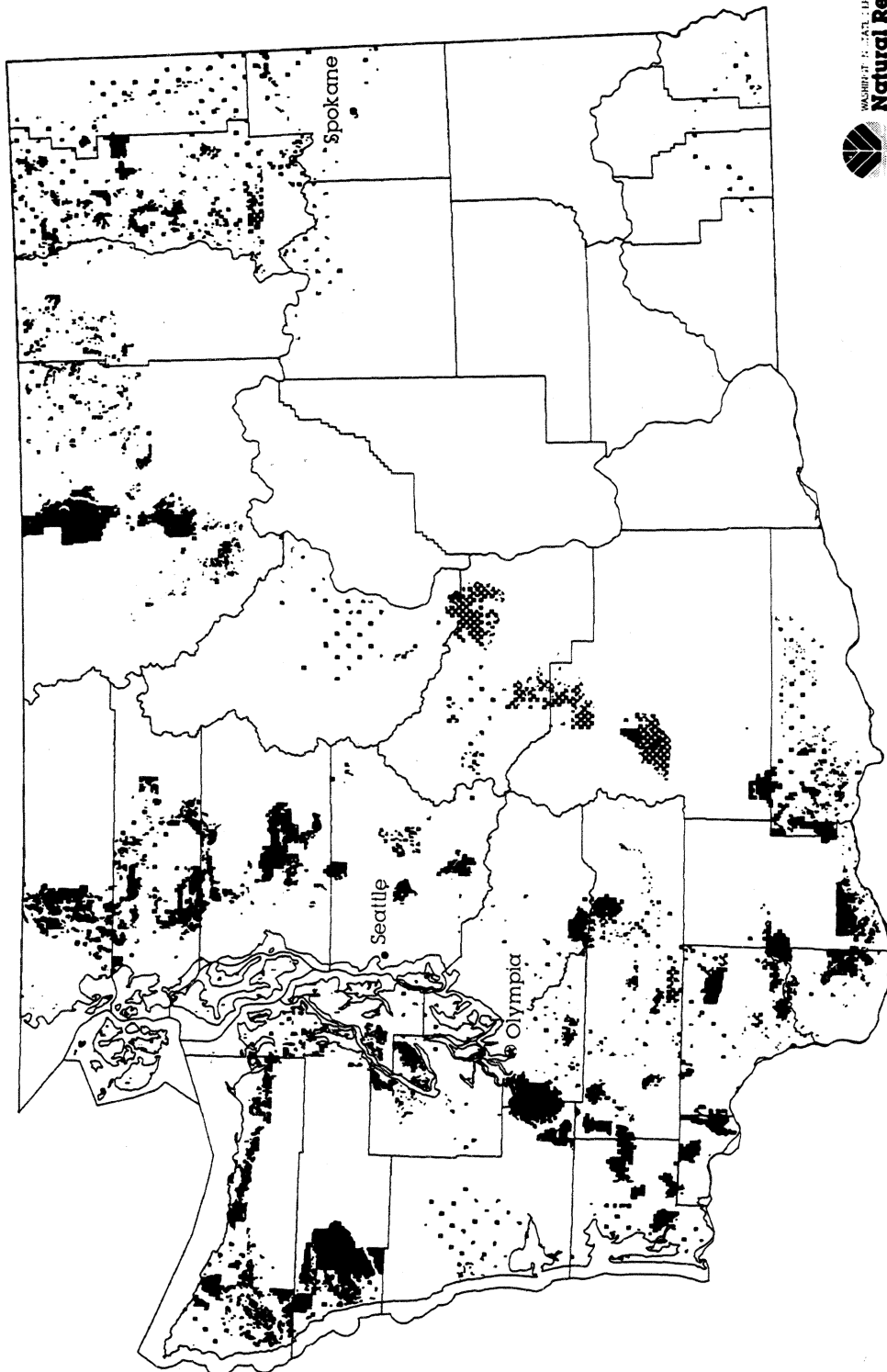
The plan does not identify management activities on specific tracts of land (for example, individual timber sales). Rather, it describes the department's general policies and priorities.

The plan needs to be read and interpreted as a whole. The policies in the plan build on one another — that is what is meant in the plan by the words, "consistent with the plan."

The plan replaces the Forest Land Management Program (FLMP), which was adopted by the Board of Natural Resources in 1983 to serve as a ten-year planning document (1984-1993). There have been many changes in forest land management in the last decade, including new Forest Practices Act regulations, the Timber, Fish and Wildlife Agreement, and federal court decisions regarding the northern spotted owl. As a result, the department believes a new planning document will allow it to better address the challenges of the 1990s and meet its responsibilities to the public and trust beneficiaries.

WASHINGTON STATE FOREST LANDS

Managed by Department of Natural Resources



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Figure 1: Location of State Forest Lands

SUBJECTS COVERED

The Forest Resource Plan addresses the key policies that will guide the department in making decisions for state forest land in the coming decade. The policies are divided into four general categories:

- trust asset management
- forest land planning
- silviculture
- implementation

The range of policies in this plan reflects the varied duties of the department and the different issues it faces in managing state forest land. The plan covers state forest land in Western and Eastern Washington.

SIZE AND LOCATION OF STATE FOREST LANDS

The 2.1 million acres addressed in the Forest Resource Plan represent approximately 5 percent of the total land base in Washington State and 12 percent of the total amount of commercial forest land. Virtually all the land addressed by the plan is forested, though the age, type of tree and landscape varies considerably from tract to tract. Approximately 68.4 percent of state forest land is in Western Washington and 31.6 percent is in Eastern Washington.

The department, acting as trustee, manages the land and its resources for schools, counties and other public institutions in Washington State.

See Figure 1 opposite for the general location of state forest lands. Figure 2 below shows the major owners of commercial forest land in Washington State.

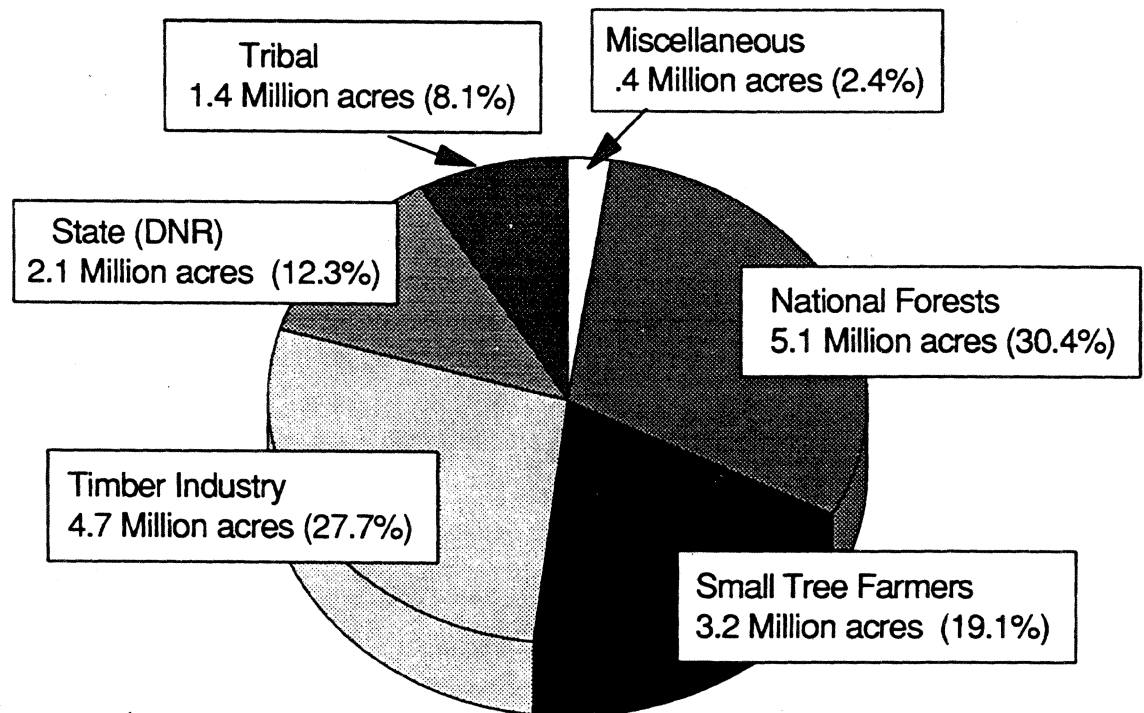


Figure 2: Major owners of commercial forest land (Washington State). DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The Department of Natural Resources, which was established in 1957, has approximately 1,300 employees located in Olympia and at seven regional offices. The Commissioner of Public Lands is the department's administrator.

The department has a broad range of responsibilities, including four distinct roles as land manager, regulator, firefighter and conservator. In its role as land manager, the department manages approximately 2.1 million acres of state forest land, 2 million acres of aquatic land (primarily tidelands and bedlands) and 1 million acres of range, agricultural and urban land.

The Forest Resource Plan addresses only the department's forest land responsibilities.

See **Appendix A** for an organizational chart of the department.

THE BOARD OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The Board of Natural Resources must approve the Forest Resource Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) before they take effect. The board establishes policies to ensure that the acquisition, management and disposition of lands and resources within the department's jurisdiction are based on sound principles.

The board is composed of six members: the Commissioner of Public Lands, who chairs the board; the Governor; the Superintendent of Public Instruction; the Dean of the College of Agriculture, Washington State University; the Dean of the College of Forest Resources, the University of Washington; and an elected representative from a county that contains Forest Board land.

Substantial revisions to the Forest Resource Plan must also be approved by the Board.

THE DEPARTMENT'S LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

THE TRUST MANDATE

The department's legal duties regarding forest lands differ from the obligations of most federal and state land management agencies. The U.S. National Park Service, for example, manages land for scenic and recreation purposes while the USDA Forest Service manages forest land for multiple uses. The department's legal duties also differ from private landowners. The department, for instance, implements numerous state laws not applicable to private owners, such as the Multiple Use Act.

The department also has a legal duty to produce long-term income for the trust beneficiaries. This principle is commonly called the trust mandate. The department is required to act prudently in discharging its responsibilities, and is held to a strict standard of accountability. (A trust is a fiduciary relationship in which one person or institution, the trustee, manages property for the benefit of another, the beneficiary. In this case, the department acts as trustee for various public institutions which are the beneficiaries. See "An Overview of State Forest Land" on pg. 6 for a description of the trusts.)

These trusts are perpetual. The trust beneficiaries will have a need for income every year. The department has an obligation to provide for all generations, without unduly favoring present or future beneficiaries. Therefore, the department believes some of its policies, which provide greater protection for state forest land than the minimum legal requirements, allow the department to preserve the long-term productivity of the forest lands and protect the range of resources found on state land for future beneficiaries.

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The primary revenue source from state forest lands has traditionally come from timber sales. In the future, other resources, uses or commodities may also provide substantial opportunities for income. As a result, the department believes it is prudent to manage state forest lands and resources so that future sources of income are not foregone by actions taken today.

The department believes it has a special responsibility to the public, which rightfully expects a high level of assurance that an agency will comply with all laws of general applicability. This obligation is also a common law duty of a trustee.

The common law duties of a trustee include: a duty to administer the trust in accordance with the provisions creating the trust; a duty of undivided loyalty to the beneficiaries; a duty to manage trust assets prudently; a duty to make the trust property productive without unduly favoring present beneficiaries over future beneficiaries; a duty to reduce the risk of loss to the trusts; and a duty to keep and render accounts.

See **Appendix B** for a discussion of the trust mandate. See **Appendix C** for the legal framework of state forest lands.

OTHER LEGAL DUTIES

The department is required to comply with numerous statutes, including the Omnibus Enabling Act of 1889, Multiple Use Act, Forest Practices Act, Shorelines Management Act, State Environmental Policy Act and the federal Endangered Species Act.

SEPA REQUIREMENTS

The Forest Resource Plan is accompanied by a final environmental impact statement prepared by the department to fulfill the legal requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The FEIS describes the plan elements and their alternatives, analyzes the environmental impacts of each and discusses the rationale for the selection of the preferred alternatives.

The alternatives were developed in the department by ten teams with a total of more than 60 employees representing a wide range of disciplines. An executive review team composed of top department managers selected the preferred alternatives after discussing the options with team members. The preferred alternatives form the policies described in the plan.

AN OVERVIEW OF STATE FOREST LAND

There are three types of state forest land: Federal Grant, Forest Board and Community College Forest Reserve. Each has its own history and characteristics (described in more detail below).

FEDERAL GRANT LANDS

On November 11, 1889, President Benjamin Harrison signed the proclamation that made Washington the 42nd state. The new state covered 42.6 million acres, much of it forested.

As part of the preparation for statehood, the Omnibus Enabling Act of 1889, passed by Congress a few months earlier, set aside two square miles of every 36 to produce financial support for the common schools. In addition, the Act granted additional lands to other public institutions. These lands are known as "Federal Grant lands" and consist of eight specific trusts:

- Common school lands, which support the construction of public schools.
- Agricultural school lands, which support the Washington State University in Pullman.
- Charitable, educational, penal and reformatory institutions lands, which support those public institutions.
- University original lands, which were used to support the University of Washington in Seattle. Only a small amount of that acreage still remains.
- University transfer lands, which were originally part of the charitable trust but were transferred by the state legislature to provide additional support to the University of Washington.

The Forest Board
was established to
regenerate trees
on the lands ...
managed for
timber production
in perpetuity.